

County: _____

Case Number: _____

**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY CONTRACT for
TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)**

This Personal Responsibility Contract is an agreement between the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) and _____ that outlines the responsibilities of each.

Responsibilities of MDHS

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program authorized under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-193) permits the State of Mississippi through the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) to provide assistance to needy families. This assistance under Title IV-A of the Social Security Act may not exceed 60 months to families including an adult who meet all eligibility requirements and who participate satisfactorily in the work program (unless exempt).

MDHS will:

- Explain TANF Work Program requirements and exemptions from work and benefit time limits.
- Determine eligibility for TANF Work Program and financial assistance.
- Provide benefits for a temporary period while the recipient named above prepares to become self-supporting.
- Make an assessment and develop an Employability Development Plan (EDP) for each adult eligible for work.
- Provide opportunity for short-term education, training, and/or work experience in preparation for work, if determined needed in the EDP.
- Help to find and pay for child care and/or transportation while the recipient is participating satisfactorily in a work activity, if needed.
- Provide child support establishment and enforcement services.
- Provide a fair hearing appeal process for persons adversely affected by TANF.
- Administer to any adult in the assistance unit a substance abuse screening questionnaire to determine the likelihood of a substance abuse problem.

The recipient will:

- Participate in Up-Front Job Search activities or apply for vocational rehabilitation services, if required, during the TANF application processing period.
- Participate in creating my individual TANF Work Program Employability Development Plan.
- Participate to the best of my ability in assigned work activities leading to getting and keeping a job.
- Accept a bona fide job offer (unless there is a good cause).
- Not voluntarily quit a job before discussing good cause and possible penalties with my worker.
- Accept personal responsibility for identifying barriers, notifying my case manager and removing or resolving the barriers (child care, transportation, attitude/grooming/hygiene issues, family problems, medical problems, etc.) that keep me from getting or keeping a job or meeting my work program requirements.
- Cooperate by providing information to determine eligibility for TANF benefits and the Work Program, including Social Security numbers, proof of age and relationship, proof of income and resources.

- Report within 5 days if the head of household moves out of state and when it is clear a child will be out of the home for more than 30 days. (Failure to timely report child leaving means disqualification.)
- Report the following changes within 10 days of the date the change becomes known to the household: a change in residence and resulting shelter costs; change in the legal child support obligation; change of more than \$100 in the amount of unearned income; change of more than \$100 in monthly earned income; a change in liquid resources, such as cash, stocks, bonds, and bank accounts.
- Assign to the State of Mississippi all rights to child support and cooperate (unless there is good cause) with child support enforcement to establish and/or obtain support.
- Send the children in my care (ages 6 through 17 years old) to school regularly and encourage their success in school.
- Obtain immunizations for the children in my care as recommended by the Mississippi Department of Health.

As an applicant for or recipient of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), I understand that:

- My family cannot receive benefits for more than a total of 60 months unless the case includes only minor children or meets one of the hardship exemptions.
- My family can receive no more than 24 months of the total 60 months without my participation in an allowable work activity, if required.
- Once I am determined ready to engage in work, I must participate in an allowable work activity, unless exempt.
- I will be referred to the TANF Work Program unless I meet a work exemption.
- If I am referred to the TANF Work Program and fail to keep my TANF Work Program Intake appointment it will mean that I no longer need TANF assistance and that I wish to withdraw my TANF Application.
- If I am not exempt from work program requirements, I cannot request my case to be closed after I am referred to the TANF Work Program and have signed my employability plan unless I provide appropriate documentation, if deemed necessary, at the time I request my case to be closed, to substantiate why I no longer need TANF assistance for my family. If appropriate documentation is not provided, my TANF case will be closed with the appropriate TWP timed penalty.
- If I qualify for either the caring for a child younger than 12 months (JJ) or the victim of domestic violence (JV) work exemption and choose to volunteer for the TANF Work Program, I will not be excluded from adverse action policy and procedures and I may be sanctioned if I do not participate satisfactorily without good cause.
- My signature on the application gives MDHS permission to verify information needed to determine eligibility and benefit amount, including electronic data exchanges for all family members, verification of school attendance, income and resources.
- My family will be denied TANF benefits for failure to assign rights of support to the State or for my failure to cooperate with child support enforcement.
- The Child Support Enforcement Office will pay me the portion of the child support collection that is left after all of my TANF benefits are recovered (subtracted) each month. I will not get a child support check if my current month's TANF benefits are more than the current month's child support collection.

- If I am an adult in the assistance unit, I will be required to take a substance abuse screening questionnaire to determine the likelihood of a substance use disorder.
 - If I do not comply with the screening requirement, my TANF application will be denied.
 - If the results of my substance abuse screening questionnaire indicate a high likelihood of a substance use disorder, I will have to submit to a random drug test.
 - If the results of my random drug test are positive, I will have to participate in an approved drug treatment plan.
- If I am required to submit to random drug testing, be assessed by a treatment provider, or enroll in a drug treatment program and I fail to comply with any of these requirements, I will receive a full-household TANF sanction.
- I may request a fair hearing when I disagree with decisions on my case.

I understand that when I do not follow my part of this Personal Responsibility Contract that my TANF benefits (and possibly SNAP benefits) can be reduced or closed.

Parent/Caretaker Signature: _____ Date: _____

Second Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

MDHS Staff Signature: _____ Date: _____